

House Armed Services Committee

DEMOCRATS

Ike Skelton, Ranking Member

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February 2, 2005

The Future of the Force Requires Candid Answers Now

Washington, DC – Today the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Military Personnel, heard testimony from the Army on the status of the current force. There is a growing concern that current military policies regarding the use of active duty, National Guard and reserve units are greatly straining our forces and hindering their ability to respond to future conflict.

A year ago the Army reassured the subcommittee that efforts were underway that would resolve some of the problems. A recent December 2004 memo from the Chief of the Army Reserve indicated that they still exist and continue to worsen.

"I am deeply concerned by this memo, particularly given the reassurances Congress was given last year," said Representative Marty Meehan (MA). "The strain that current policies are placing on the Army Reserve is very troubling. Unless some changes are made, I fear that the Army Reserve may be unable to meet future demands."

"As members of the Armed Services Committee, we can help avoid this crisis, but in order to do so, we need straightforward, candid answers. So far, the Department of Defense has been reluctant to provide those to us," commented Representative Susan Davis (CA).

Representative Loretta Sanchez (CA) stated, "The United States has the best all-volunteer force in the world. But if we continue with our current practices, we run the risk of breaking the force. We are going to wake up one day soon and realize that we have a manpower crisis on our hands."

"I am hopeful that in the upcoming year we will get the facts and answers we need to keep our forces, particularly the reserve component, functioning at its best," Sanchez continued.

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